

# WIC and Oral Health

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*More Smiling Faces* in a SCDHEC led oral health initiative funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and managed by the Center for Health Care Strategies

# Early childhood caries—tooth decay

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- ❑ Defined as the presence of decayed primary teeth
- ❑ Also known as baby bottle tooth decay
- ❑ Advances rapidly due to the thinness of the enamel





# What are the costs?

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- Children with early childhood tooth decay are more likely to get more decay in their permanent teeth.
- Goes beyond pain and infection...
  - Affects their speech
  - Affects their ability to eat
  - Affects their ability to learn
  - Affects the way they feel about themselves
- Dental treatment can be very costly, especially hospitalization for treatment.



# What can you do? ACTS

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- ☐ Ask
- ☐ Check
- ☐ Teach
- ☐ Send

# Ask: Mother who is pregnant

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- If she has been to the dentist?
- Do you have an appointment with the dentist?
- Why?
  - To have teeth and gums checked by dentist
  - Severe gum disease in pregnant women has been linked to pre-term and low birth weight babies.
  - If cavities are present, repair of decayed teeth is important to mother and baby.





# Ask: Mother of infant or child

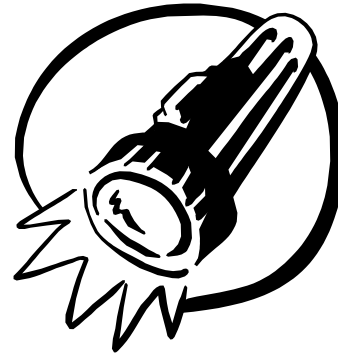
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- ❑ Conditions that put a child at risk for tooth decay
  - History of dental decay in mother, child and other family members
  - Family is of low economic status
  - Child consumes a high sugar/complex carbohydrate diet
  - Child has special health care needs
  - Child was premature/low birth weight
  - Child routinely is prescribed medications that are sugar based or that reduce salivary flow

# Check:

## Tools for checking the mouth and teeth

- Light
- Tongue depressor
- Toothbrush
- Gloves



# Check: knee to knee position

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# Check: mouth and teeth

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- Lift the lip
  - Look for presence of plaque and food on teeth
  - Check for red, swollen or bleeding gums
  - Check for blister-like bumps on the gum about a tooth



Tip: a toothbrush can be used to count the child's teeth and can also serve as a mouth prop, preventing the child from biting down on your finger.

# Check:

## show parent how to do a *Smile Check*

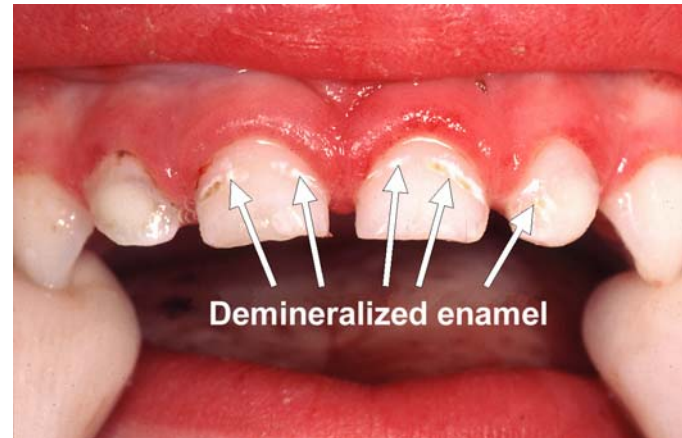
- Gently lift your child's upper lip
- Look at the outside and the inside of the upper front teeth



# Check: the teeth

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- From the outside
  - Look for “White Spots”
  - Look for obvious signs of tooth decay such as brown spots or breaks in the tooth surface
- Look on the inside of the upper front teeth



# Check: the back teeth

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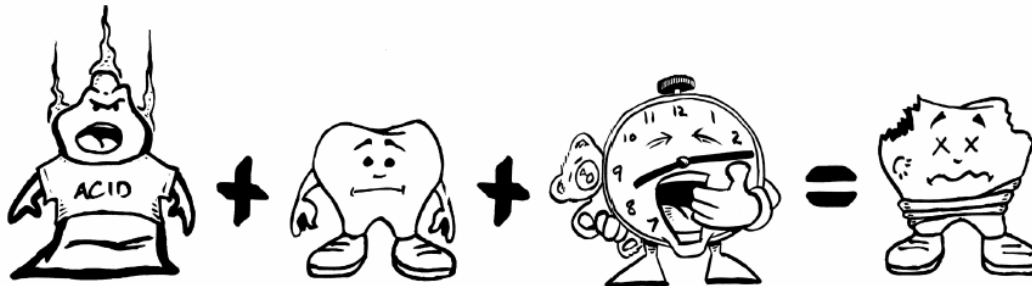
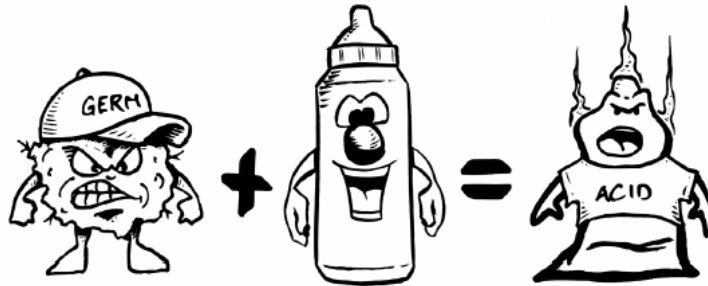


- Look for
  - Dark spots and stains
  - Breaks in the tooth surface

# Teach

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- Through WIC you have an opportunity to impact the oral health of the women and children that you serve!



# Teach: Anticipatory Guidance

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- ❑ Diean's presentation
- ❑ The *Oral Health Parent Information* guide produced by the Division of Oral Health is in your packet along with the *Bright Futures in Practice: Oral Health Pocket Guide*.



Teach:

# Happy First Birthday Card

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- To encourage parents to brush their child's teeth and take them to the dentist by age one.

# Send: mother to the dentist

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- ❑ To check for the health of teeth and gums
- ❑ Cavity causing germs can be passed to baby after birth.
- ❑ Mothers with gum disease are at greater risk for having premature and low birth weight babies.





# Send: All children to a dentist

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 Normal Oral Structures



- ❑ American Academy of Pediatrics and American Academy of Pediatric Dentists
- ❑ 1<sup>st</sup> birthday, 1<sup>st</sup> dental check

# Send: to the dentist within 1 month

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**Baby Bottle Tooth Decay  
(Nursing Caries)**



Mild

**Baby Bottle Tooth Decay  
(Nursing Caries)**



Moderate

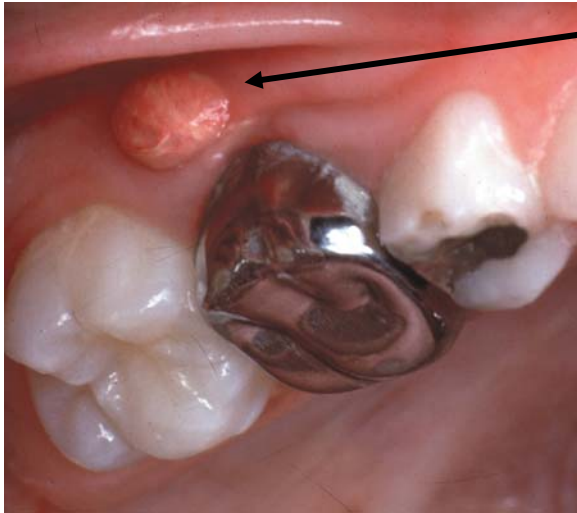
Send: to the dentist within 1 month

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# Send: to the dentist immediately

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- Signs or symptoms that include pain, infection, swelling or soft tissue ulceration of more than 2 weeks duration determined by questioning.

# Send: to the dentist immediately

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**Baby Bottle Tooth Decay  
(Nursing Caries)**

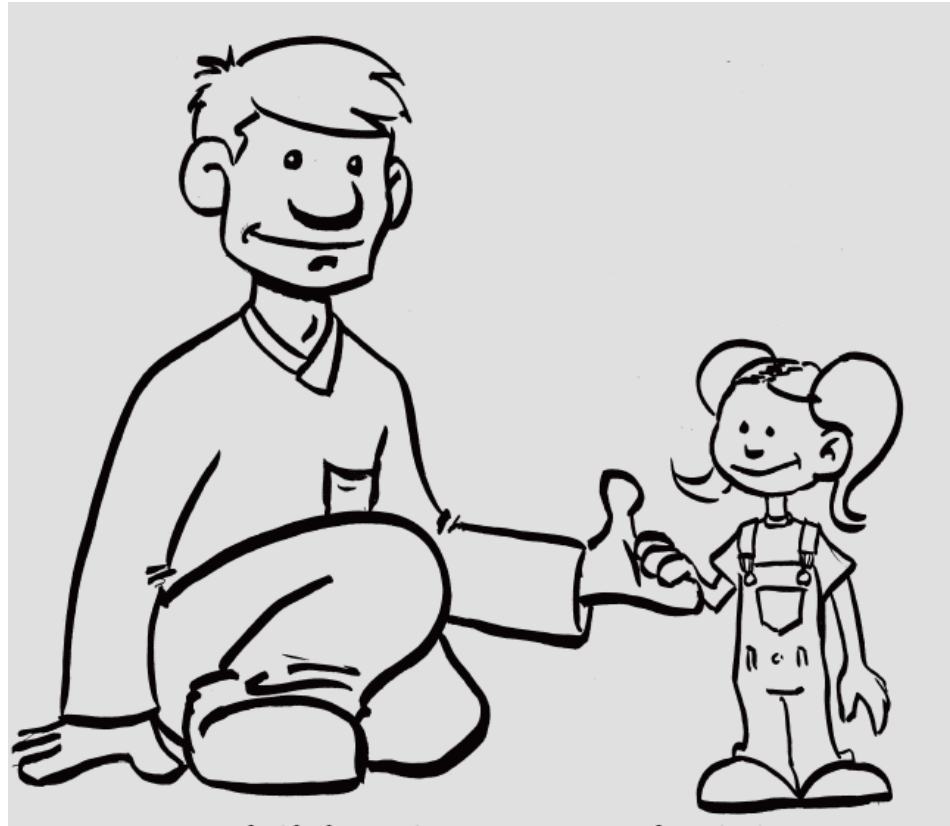


Severe

# Send: to establish a dental home

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- ❑ Refer high risk children by 6 months
- ❑ Refer all children by the age of one



Parent Information Booklet:

How do I find a good dentist for my child?, page 14

Your Child's First Dental Visit, page 15

# Send: to the dentist

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- The findings...are provided below:
  - **Important:** send all children to the dentist
  - **Very Important:** send to the dentist within one month of discovering suspicious tooth decay.
  - **Priority:** send to the dentist immediately upon finding severe tooth decay or gum problems!!





# You can make a difference!!

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- ❑ **Ask:** about dental history of mother and child
- ❑ **Check:** to see if there are any signs of tooth decay or gum problems present
- ❑ **Teach:** oral health education and anticipatory guidance
- ❑ **Send:** to a dentist to establish a dental home or for other oral health concerns



# Thank You!!

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